each Sunday morning. SERVICE Spirit" WORSHIP Together in Ready for your participation STEPHEN'S Ľ

own home comfort of your the Worship in

at www.stephenslutheran.org to the recording в

(Print the bulletin and Celebrate so you can read, sing and pray with Pastor Jim. Have some bread and wine/grape juice ready for Holy Communion) NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON November 24, 2020

POST OFFICE: DATED MATERIAL PLEASE DO NOT DELAY St Stephen's Lutheran Church 2500 Soquel Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062





The Season of Advent

Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 13 & 20

Advent means "coming". It is a season of preparation. We prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. This is a joyous time when God's people join in the excitement, anticipation, and enthusiasm of the sights and sounds of the holiday season. We will observe the tradition of lighting the Advent Wreath and adorning the tree with the Chrismons (Christian symbols) We will also pray for those who may not have a church home with the intention of inviting them to Christmas Eve Service.

Christmas Eve Worship

Thursday, Dec. 24 3:00 pm in the Parkinglot

A recorded Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be available on our website.



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Evangelical Lutheran Church of America 2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95062 Phone-831-476-4700 — Fax-831-476-3918 www.ststephenslutheran.org email-office@ststephenslutheran.org

Rev. James P. Lapp, Pastor

Ministers: The Entire Congregation

Church Council: Pres. — Renee Rice V.P. — Robert Bartee Secretary - Jay Johnston Treasurer— Kent Madsen David Balogh, Bill Schraft, Alyssa Burkhardt, Paul Cunningham, and Steven Hendrickson Director of Music: Gary Roberts Sunday School: Leslie Lapp Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens John Hopping Custodian: Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp Office Open: Mon.—Thurs. 8:30am—2:30pm

Pastor Jim's Office Hours — Weds. & Thurs. 10 am to 1 pm

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith, serve others with acceptance and love, and invite people to share the joy of the Spirit.

VISION STATEMENT

To become an energetic, inclusive, multigenerational, multicultural, missional community that offers, hope, joy, worship, service, play, and life as disciples of Jesus Christ



Cunningham

Dawson

12-31 Dusty Gipson

12-31 Jeanette

12-04 John & Kathy Hopping

12-22 Chris & Lorie Juhl



12-8 Maryann Hurttgam

12-14 Sheryl Brouse

12-15 Robert Bartee

12-18 Leslie Ruble

Short Term: Healthcare workers, teachers, Kent Madsen, Charles Eldridge, The Wickham Family, Family of Eleanor Zoellner, Barbara J., Donna, Betsy, Tom, Anna, Krispa, Patsy, Zachary Sherilyn Jager & family, Family of Delores Price, Family of Al Mitchell, Jennifer & family, Family of Cheryl Denny, Jean Patterson, Sheila, Frank Giammona, Heather, Kevin,

Family of Suzanne Duval, Vanessa, Rose, Shelly Barker & family, Sam, George Webber & Family, Cox Family, Becky & Aaron Johnson, Marlene Simmen & family, Lorraine Chavez, Lora Schraft Poulson, Nelleke, Hendrick, Chuck, Michael, Kayla, Don, Lina, Sal, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Cabel, Miller, Kyle, Noah, Esdras, Jackson, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim and Our Church Family. Long Term: The Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, John B., Michelle, Josh, CJ, Susan Anderson, Rick, Bobbie Erickson, Edna Lindquist, Richard C., Eric VonSchell, Lauri Hollist, Ken Pahel, Pat M., Gary, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Barry & Barbara, Chris & Lorie Juhl, Karin, Will, Chris, Pat Hubbard, Cathy, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, men and women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.



El Salvador Sister Parish News

Welcome to the sister parish corner, with news and updates on the work with our companion communities in El Salvador, **Guillermo Ungo** and **El Pilar**.

Sponsorships

From Gwen May, president of the Santa Cruz al Salvador Board:

"Thank you for your past support of the children in Guillermo Ungo. It has been an honor to watch the children grow and flourish with the support given from you to Santa Cruz al Salvador.

We all know this has been a trying year in so many ways ... we will not be able to send a delegation to El Salvador in January 2021. This means we will not be asking you to make a gift bag for the delegation to deliver to your prayer child. We are asking that you open up your hearts and make an additional contribution in lieu of a gift bag. It only takes a little from us to make a big difference in the lives of the children we have come to know and love in Ungo. We are requesting an additional \$50 donation to provide for the families this year. We will be very happy should you decide to give more, the need is ever greater this year.

With great appreciation for all your contributions which will help SCaS navigate this difficult time."

Those of you with prayer children continuing from last year have already received an email with an electronic Commitment Card. Please print the card (page two of your email), fill it out, enclose your donation (or contribute online), and mail as indicated on the card. **Thank you!**

Holiday Alternative Gifting

Again this year we have a Donation Acknowledgement Card with a picture greeting from Salvadorian children and notation inside that "A donation has been made in your honor to Santa Cruz al Salvador, mission project of area Presbyterian & Lutheran Churches." On the back is our motto: "Building Relationships for Better Lives" with the explanation that donations provide scholarships, school supplies, pure water and composting toilets in two rural poverty communities. We hope you will consider making a donation in honor of family & friends on your Holiday gift list this year making a donation of the amount you would have spent for their gift. Contact Kent Madsen to make donations & receive Donation Acknowledgment Card(s). Thanks again for supporting our friends in El Salvador.

Kent Madsen, for Santa Cruz al Salvador

14

from Pastor Jim

Below, I include our Bishop Mark Holmerud's most recent message to us. I found it very comforting and to be helpful guidance as we continue our time caring for the more vulnerable among us, and our waiting as part of Advent.

Four words: "It's not time yet".

It's not time yet:

- + to return to indoor worship
- + to stop wearing masks
- + to forget physical distancing
- + to ignore science
- + to gather in large groups for Thanksgiving or Christmas
- + to deny the exponential growth of cases of COVID-19 being diagnosed every day in this country and around the world

Four more words: "I know you're tired".

I know you're tired:

- + of not being able to be with family and friends
- + of not being able to worship together in the sanctuary and sing
- + of not being able to travel
- + of not being able to leave your home
- + of not being able to hold your grandchildren/children/loved ones
- + of hearing admonitions like this from health professionals and bishops

Four last words: "God is in control" (Psalm 23).

God is in control:

- + even (and especially) in this time of pandemic (Psalm 91)
- + despite what some see as evidence to the contrary (Psalm 46)
- + through the work of health care workers, clinicians, and epidemiologists (Sirach 38)
- + in the presence of courageous essential workers (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15)
- + as we help God's reign come near in seeking the well-being of the most vulnerable among us (Matthew 25:31-46)
- + because nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:31-39)
- Blessings and Peace in this season of Thanksgiving & Advent, Bishop Mark



Council Highlights

- 1. For devotions, Pastor Jim reflected on how it has been a very stressful time for us as a church family because so much of what we do together has been changed. It is hard to feel as connected as we usually are, and loneliness and anxiety are things we constantly struggle with. He has found that it has been such a spiritual help to spend at least 30 minutes a day in a quiet meditation. He offered and excerpt by Jack Canfield – the author of the popular series of books "Chicken Soup for the Soul". He is convinced that having this kind of daily focus produces all kinds of positive spiritual benefits because it slows down our brain and naturally produces more feelings of centeredness. peace and joy. Pastor Jim often just repeats the liturgical phrase "Come Holy Spirit" as a way of moving into a more receptive frame of mind to listen to what God may saying, and to what we might be neglecting to heal and resolve that which stifles our spirit.
- Pastor Jim reported on our former Church Musician Suzanne Duval's Memorial Ser-2. vice planning. It was the first one we have held at the church since we suspended our in-person gatherings. It went very well, with about 40 people attending in person, while 77 others attended via the livestream Zoom broadcast led by one of Suzanne's many friends in the Santa Cruz music community. Seven different people spoke in tribute to Suzanne and there were 3 pieces of recorded music featuring Suzanne's angelic soprano voice as a solo performance on both the Santa Cruz Chorale and the Ariose Singers. It was a very moving and meaningful time that so many had been waiting for so long to share. Thank you especially to our Gary Roberts for leading us in singing the two songs chosen by her family (Morning Has Broken & Simple Gifts) and the one chosen by Pastor Jim (Healer of Our Every III).
- 3. Kent Madsen is working with our bank Comerica to file the necessary forms for our PPP loan to be forgiven. Once that is done, our financial bottom line will not look so out of balance because those funds can be included as income.

Reconciled In Christ Welcome Statement

(Approved at January 2020 Congregational Meeting)

"We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ."

For Suzanne's Memorial Service Nov. 15 From Connie Creel in Santa Barbara

I am so sorry to miss this memorial service for Suzanne Duval, one of my dearest friends whom we lost much too soon. I am still grieving this loss and regretting that I was not able to help her in her hour of need.

I am having a partial LEFT knee replacement surgery early tomorrow morning here in Santa Barbara where I now live. I mention this because over two years ago on a dark morning in March the day following my RIGHT knee replacement surgery, Suzanne came to the Capitola Surgery Center at 6 am in pouring rain to pick me up and take me home. She then stayed with me, fed and cared for me during the day so I would not be alone.

This is just one of many examples of Suzanne's empathy and compassion for others that I witnessed during the 20 years that we were friends:

• Cheryl was once a vibrant and faithful member of St. Stephens who developed a debilitating disease and eventually had to live in a skilled nursing facility for many years. Suzanne visited her and later told me of Cheryl's loneliness.

• Kenyatta was released from prison and befriended by the St. Stephen's Congregation. When he lost his housing and his employment, Suzanne opened her home to him while she was traveling out of town.

• Pastor Roy Hoch was recovering from surgery and Suzanne told me how she had cooked a roast beef dinner with all the trimmings and brought it to Roy and Mary Iane.

• Suzanne loved welcoming Japanese exchange students into her home over several summers and learning about their culture and language. Suzanne was a sensitive and caring person.

She also had the voice of an angel and a tremendous gift for teaching people how to sing. For 20 years under her direction the St. Stephens Choir offered beautiful music to the congregation every Sunday. As our choir director, she was patient and kind with a gentle sense of humor. We learned so much from her. My favorite memories are of going to her warm, cozy home two or three times a year to select the music the choir would learn. Suzanne would offer me a cup of herbal tea and Chloe her cat, and later Olive, would be there with us. Suzanne would sight-read the pieces on her baby grand piano that took up most of the living room and we would sing together. Our friendship bonded in those moments. I really miss her!

> Dear Suzanne, May flights of angels sing you to your rest. *Give rest, O Lord, to your handmaid who has fallen asleep. Alleluia.* 13

An Unexpected Bridge

by Leslie Lapp

These days, we hear of crisis and tragedy on a regular basis. Often the news leaves us feeling sad and helpless. What do I have to offer that could possibly ease the suffering and bring a little light into the darkness? Little did I know that a simple phone inquiry would lead to a surprising partnership and adventure in generosity.

I started out wearing my church administrator hat, then crossed into the church member role, and ended up just plain ol' human. COVID has blurred the already confusing lines we walk. Whatever the case, it was my honor to represent SSLC and network with some

faithful people who wanted to provide a little comfort to victims of the CZU fire. The initial outreach came from Sylvia at Hope Lutheran Church in San Mateo. Her quilting group sends 50 quilts each year to Lutheran World Relief AND additional quilts to local organizations who serve those in need. They called our church wondering if any of our folks, or friends lost their homes?

When I reached out to our people who live in the fire zone, I learned that Dusty Gipson knows that church well. Years ago, she and both her girls were baptized at Hope. What a beautiful connection! Then I called the Mountain Community Resource Center (part of Community Bridges whom we support regularly). They are very involved with the Fire recovery and were happy to accept whatever quilts we could provide. In the meantime, word was spreading of this offer. I received a call from a woman at Bonny Doon Church who was referred by Cheryl Curry. She knew of MANY families who would appreciate this gesture. The ball is rolling. The Hope ladies were thrilled that we found a way to distribute their handiwork.

As I enthusiastically informed my family of this project, my son asked if he could accompany me to pick them up in San Mateo. This is another story in itself, but suffice it to say the Spirit was in action. We were warmly greeted by 2 of the lovely quilters. Before COVID, they met 2 full days a month to create these quilts. They wanted to share the moment with their isolated partners, so we laid them out for a photo. We marveled at all the colors and patterns. Some were quite difficult to make. These women reminded me of some of the special women in my life, pillars of our church, saints that have gone before us, those who helped in my faith formation, and my childrens. I have so much respect for people led by the spirit to share their talents.

I am grateful for this opportunity 12 to be a bridge of love sharing.

Child Development Center

Merry Christmas! Even with all that is going on around us, I am full of gratitude for our St. Stephen's community. We

had an amazing parade with the children for Halloween in which many seniors observed from their windows. The rest of our activities will be limited as winter comes. The following is the message I shared with parents regarding November Progress Reports. These reports are such an important part of our communication and accountability, and what distinguishes us as a Child Development Center.

The Home-and-Family connection has been more challenging during Covid-19. We are not able to schedule in-person Parent Teacher conferences this November. Also, some of the information may be different than it might have been if our students school year had not been interrupted. However, the deeper connection they have had with parents while home has showed as a benefit here at school. Our children this year show great adaptation, resilience, and peace. They do what needs to be done regarding masks and handwashing without complaint! I observe an overall calm and gratitude among the entire group as they enjoy being together and enjoying our familiar routine. You all did an excellent job preparing your child for a situation that has no script. Our team considers it a privilege to serve you and your family.

The goal of this Progress Report is to provide you with a snapshot of how your child is doing now, creating a baseline from which to compare when we screen in May. If you should find any information that you would like to discuss, or question, please contact Kathy via email and we can go from there on how to connect. Children are constantly developing and changing. This report will give you an idea of where we are now and the individual goals we have for your child. Although cognitive learning is a priority, social emotional growth comes first and then they develop in tandem. Our Progress Reports are as important to your teachers as they are for the students, as they offer accountability to knowing each child, and their learning style.

Over the years, we have received positive feedback on how well prepared our students are from our alumni families as they venture to Kindergarten. It is our goal to continue this for each child who we have the privilege to spend time with. Please do not hesitate to contact Kathy first if you want to discuss further the goals for your child. Under the circumstances of Covid-19, we feel confident that we will provide the appropriate support and guidance to each child as we navigate to the vaccine together.

With teamwork and grace, we will get through this while giving the educational and emotional support needed for your child to thrive! Warmly, Kathy Berens

Book Recommendation & Review by Robert Bartee

"<u>White Fragililty: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism</u>" by Robin Diangelo

Remembering, as a black 12-year-old male, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and some events that immediately followed to respond to racial tensions in those early years, I thought I was witnessing a change in many people's attitudes, thoughts and behaviors with regards to the issues of race and race relations. I had imagined changing beliefs and attitudes, and I thought we were finally going to realize Dr King's dream that, we, black people '...would not be judged by the color of our skin but by the content of our character.' The unfortunate murder of George Floyd, along with a cascade of other numerous racist incidents that I have witnessed or experienced, has provided me a more nuanced retrospective. I am also mindful as well of the race-based experiences of family, friends, and other people of color. These experiences have left me often feeling adrift on a tiny raft in a churning sea of racial animosity, white supremacy and implicit racial bias with few safe harbors to steer to in a raging storm. Robin DiAngelo's book "<u>White Fragility: Why</u> <u>It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism</u>", has for me become a safe harbor because this book can be used to educate and empower white people to reject the benefits of racism and more importantly to start to engage in anti-racism work.

Dr. DiAngelo takes great pains to speak to an issue that white people really should address. The issue she takes on is how to get white people to be responsible for engaging other white people in undoing, dismantling and undermining the systems of racial bias, white supremacy and racial oppression that benefits most people but inevitably hurts all people. Her book is not a simplistic or easy read. It challenges the reader to sit with some personal uncomfortable truths and revelations about how racism and white supremacy have overtly and covertly benefited them or worked to their advantage. The reader is ultimately challenged to acknowledge their privilege in the world and to work consistently to undo, dismantle and educate other white people about these issues and to work for change. DiAngelo challenges the reader not to engage in introspection, rather she challenges the reader to move into action and provides tools and resources to do so. This book can evoke tears, feeling of unease, and anger in most readers. In the end, this book can feel like the painful debriding of a wound. Only after the wounds of racism have been debrided can true racial healing begin.

We have a few copies for our library, Call 476-4700 if you'd like to borrow one.

6

Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)

2020 through October	
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$305
SS Scholarships	\$380
Live Oak Resource Center	\$245
Habitat for Humanity	\$470
Mt. Cross	\$410
World Hunger	\$245
Housing Matters	\$315
CLU/PLTS	\$335
Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$470
SS CDC	\$765
El Salvador Sister Parish	\$200
Lutheran World Relief	\$0
ELCA Synod	\$750
СОРА	\$1,500
Lutheran Immigration	\$0
Total	\$6,390
2020 Benevolence Target (10%)	\$14,658
% of Target	44%



Treasurer Notes ... **Budget Information** · October 2020

	October Actual		YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Net
Contribution Income	\$10,857	\$11,833	\$118,950	\$121,418	\$-2,468
Facility Use Income *	\$538	\$1,535	\$9,808	\$15,346	\$-5,538
Investment Income	\$3,385	\$3,750	\$37,873	\$37,500	\$373
Total Income	\$14,780	\$17,118	\$166,631	\$174,264	\$-7,633
Expenses	\$18,111	\$19,117	\$189,311	\$194,870	\$-5,559
Net	\$-3,331	\$-1,999	\$-22,680	\$-20,606	\$-2,074

* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month + Miscellaneous Income. Contribution income for October was below budget, and we're falling behind with Facility Use Income; we're helped by somewhat lower expenses, but still running with a deficit larger than expected. A Paycheck Protection Program loan in the amount of \$59,300 was granted to St. Stephen's and the Child Development Center, which is not included as income yet.

While the church is closed to fight the coronavirus pandemic, our expenses continue. Thank vou to those who have mailed contributions or made them online on our website.

Special funds for the Organ, Piano, Hearing Impaired, **Solar Electricity and Narthex Bathroom**

	October	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Organ	\$20	\$260	
Piano	\$0	\$290	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$167		\$15,492
Narthex Bathroom	10)	Paid Off!!

Provide Lunches for Volunteers Tuesday, December 22



Contact church office if you can provide Sandwiches, Fruit, Chips or Cookies



Thursday Bible Studies

Zoom with Pastor Jim (check email on Weds. for link) 11am -12noon and 7:30 pm –8:30 pm (new time)

We will be looking at the upcoming scripture readings for Sunday, to enrich our worship experience and uncover some of the deeper truths of our faith. As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.

Special December Benevolence Offering



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, LASTING I

This is a ministry of U.S. Lutherans Lutheran World Relief serving communities living in pov-PROMISE. erty overseas. It is perhaps best known for the way it responds to the suffering induced by natural disas-

ters. The current crisis is in the path of Hurricane destruction in Central America. But day in and out, LWR works far beyond emergency operations. Their vision is a world in which each person, every community, and all generations live in justice, dignity and peace. Learn more at LWR.org.

November–Santa Cruz al Salvador / Sister Parish = \$ 205 (as of Nov. 22)

Greetings from Lutherans in Edina, MN

We got a call from **Tina Person in Edina, MN**. Her mother Yvonne Ford is living at Sunshine Villa. Both are lifelong Lutherans. They watch our service together on the computer via Alexa! Tina is a music teacher and she had to mention how much she enjoys our trumpet player. Tina asked that her mother be put on our mailing list, specifically wants a weekly bulletin to follow along with us during worship. She was also interested in connecting with our other members who live at Sunshine Villa. What a small world!

<u>ELCA Good Gifts and</u> God's Global Barnyard



As odd as it seems to give someone the gift of a cow, or a goat, or some chicks, or honey bees, it is this kind of a gift that can change a life, a family and possibly a whole community.

These Gifts are a creative, meaningful way to support the ministries that mean the most to you and your loved ones. The items in the

Good Gifts catalog lift up examples of work being done in different projects and programs supported by funds from the ELCA: Fund for Leaders, Global Church Sponsorship, Malaria Campaign, New Congregations, Vision for Mission, World Hunger and Disaster Response. Each of these programs is a long-term partnership-based ministry that focus on the needs identified by local congregations and global companion churches and their communities.

Your gifts to God's Global Barnyard will support the sustainable development ministries of the ELCA World Hunger, which include training, education, resources (and much more) to help the community care for animals and create new market opportunities like starting a small business selling eggs, meat or dairy products. Your gifts support this comprehensive approach to animal husbandry. ELCA.org or 1-800-638-3522

The Season of Giving

This holiday season, we thank everyone who has supported St. Stephen's this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead.

If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to check out our automated giving program. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions₈ Janet Slay 475-5668.

Advent Wreath

Growing up in a Lutheran church, an Advent Wreath has always been part of counting the weeks until Christmas. It was exciting to watch each week as the wreath which hung from velvet ropes, was lowered from the ceiling so that an acolyte could light the next candle on the



wreath. It has been my pleasure and privilege to construct the Advent Wreath for St. Stephen's these past years. As in past years, I dedicate this wreath to the memory of my mother who helped me put my first Advent wreath together.

The word Advent means "the arrival". The wreath is round, it has no beginning and no end and is made of living evergreens to help us remember that Jesus is the beginning and the end. The four candles on the wreath signify hope, peace, joy, and love, and the candle in the middle of the wreath, the fifth candle is lit on Christmas Eve as a symbol of Christ's coming into the world. This candle is known as the Christ Candle.

But, what is the origin of the Wreath? Johann Hinrich Wichern was a Lutheran Missionary in Hamburg, Germany in1833 where he ministered to the poor. As part of his ministry, he founded a school for neglected and orphaned children to feed, house and educate them. During the time leading up to Christmas, the children could not contain their excitement. To help the children wait patiently Johann created the first Advent wreath. The first wreath had 24 candles. The four largest were white and lit on one of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The twenty smaller candles that circled the wreath were red and one was lit each day during daily prayers until Christmas Eve when the entire wreath was lit.

The tradition of lighting the Advent wreath caught on in Hamburg and spread throughout Germany. As the tradition evolved, the number of candles lessened so that there were only four white candles, one for each Sunday leading up to Christmas. In 1930 the Custom of the Advent Wreath spread to North America.

It is because of the historical significance of using white candles on the early wreaths that we use white candles on our Advent wreath at St. Stephen's. So as we light each candle on the wreath and wait for the coming of the Savior I hope you will all take time out of your busy schedules to join together as a family to give thanks and remember that Jesus came into this world as a baby and lived among us, died for us and rose again and we wait for the day that He will come again. - Barbara Johnston